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ABSTRACT

During the past three years more than 80 scholars, students, and educational leaders have participated with the Higher Education Research Institute in an extended series of dialogues about issues of spirituality, authenticity, meaning, wholeness, and self-renewal in higher education. These dialogues explored issues related to: achieving a greater sense of community, spirituality, and shared purpose in higher education; what are the causes of the divisions and fragmentation experienced by many academics in their institutional and personal lives; what it means to be authentic, both in the classroom and in dealings with students; and what disconnections higher education is experiencing within and in relation to the larger society. Through personal narratives the monograph explores expressions of spirituality, as well as obstacles to and facilitators of spiritual development; value conflicts; personal authenticity; sources of stress, including time pressures, competition between work and family life, research and publication, administrative responsibilities, students and teaching, tenure and peer review, and institutional climate; effect of stress; coping with stress; and sources of renewal. The monograph concludes with a brief review of ongoing and further work on spirituality in higher education. Appended are letters of invitation, the interview protocol, and a list of committee members(CH)

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MEANING AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE LIVES OF COLLEGE FACULTY:

A Study of Values, Authenticity, and Stress

ED 445 613

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by

Alexander W. Astin and Helen S. Astin

with the assistance of

Anthony L. Antonio, John Astin, and Christine M. Cress

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HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES NOVEMBER, 1999

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Higher Education Research Institute
University of California, Los Angeles
November, 1999

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Background of the Study

"Institutions are projections of what goes on in the human heart."

—Parker Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known*

A movement is emerging in higher education in which many academics find themselves actively searching for meaning and trying to discover ways to make their lives and their institutions more whole. This quest reflects a growing concern with recovering spirituality and meaning in American society more generally. Because of the broad formative roles that colleges and universities play in our society, higher education represents a critical focal point for responding to this quest.

To facilitate and encourage higher education's participation in this effort, during the past three years the Fetzer Institute has brought more than 80 scholars, students, and educational leaders to the Institute to participate in an extended series of dialogues about issues of spirituality, authenticity, meaning, wholeness, and self-renewal in higher education. These dialogues explored a variety of issues related to the following questions:

- How do we achieve a greater sense of community, spirituality, and shared purpose in higher education? Where are the opportunities for renewal for individuals and for institutions as a whole?
- What are the causes of some of the divisions and fragmentation experienced by many academics in their institutional and personal lives?
- What does it mean to be authentic, both in the classroom and in our dealings with colleagues?
- What are the disconnections higher education is experiencing within and in relation to the larger society?

For many academics, "spirituality" can be a loaded word, especially if it conjures up notions of sectarian religious indoctrination, mythology, superstition, and the like. But the sense in which we have used this term in the Fetzer dialogues is much different and much broader, encompassing the individual's sense of self, sense of mission and purpose in life, and the personal meaning that one makes out of one's work. We believe that, in applying such a definition,

each person will view his or her spirituality in a unique way. For some academics, conventional religious beliefs may indeed help to form part of the core of their spirituality; for others, such beliefs may play little or no part. *How* one defines his or her spirituality or, if your prefer, sense of meaning and purpose in life, is not the issue. The important point is that academia has for far too long encouraged us to lead fragmented and inauthentic lives, where we act either as if we are *not* spiritual beings, or as if our spiritual side is irrelevant to our vocation or work. Under these conditions, our work becomes divorced from our most deeply felt values, and we hesitate to discuss issues of meaning, purpose, authenticity, wholeness, and fragmentation with our colleagues. At the same time, we likewise discourage our students from engaging these same issues among themselves and with us.

We recognize that our difficulties in achieving a greater sense of wholeness and spirituality in higher education have been exacerbated by many competing values: the need to secure adequate resources versus the need to preserve institutional autonomy and academic freedom; the commitment to advance the frontiers of knowledge versus the commitment to educate students well and to serve the community; the commitment to academic excellence versus the commitment to educational opportunity and equity; the quest for individual professional achievement and recognition versus the desire to nurture and sustain an intellectual community. In recent years these conflicts have been intensified by declining resources and public pressures for greater "accountability" and, at a more personal level, by the divisions and tensions that often emerge between family and work.

These stresses and tensions have serious implications for the academic community, not only for those faculty and staff whose lives have become increasingly fragmented and disconnected, but also for their students.

In an effort to deepen our understanding of these issues, the Fetzer Institute contracted with UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute in the Fall of 1997 to conduct an in depth study of college and university faculty at a diverse sample of colleges and universities. The principal aim of the study was to explore the role of meaning and spirituality in faculty life by engaging a representative sample of faculty in a series of personal interviews that focussed on issues of purpose, authenticity, wholeness, fragmentation, and stress in their personal and work lives. This report summarizes the major findings that emerged from these interviews and presents a series of recommendations for further inquiry into this increasingly important topic.

METHOD

During the Winter and Spring quarters of the 1997-98 academic year staff of the Higher Education Research Institute at University of California, Los Angeles interviewed seventy faculty from four California colleges and universities. The four diverse institutions included a comprehensive state university; a traditional public research university; a second research university with undergraduate education organized on a "collegiate" model; and a religiously affiliated private college.

About 200 faculty were identified as potential participants (about 50 from each institution). The faculty at each institution were selected from five departmental divisions: Life Sciences; Social Sciences; Physical Sciences; Arts and Humanities; and Professional schools. Faculty at each institution were identified through institutional Web Sites or telephone directories. Interviewees were oversampled at each institution to insure that there would be about 20 faculty who would be available and willing to be interviewed during the period of time we had designated for data collection. Although nearly all names were selected randomly, in a few cases a special effort was made to select women and minorities from departments where women and faculty of color are underrepresented (e.g., Engineering, Mathematics, Physics).

Letters of invitation (see Appendix) were mailed to the selected faculty at each institution. Interviewees were subsequently followed up by telephone or e-mail to inquire about their willingness to participate and to schedule an interview time. Overall very few faculty declined to be interviewed in three of the institutions. The sole exception was the traditional research university, where 14 of the 50 faculty who were e-mailed said that they did not have the time to be interviewed.

The interviewed faculty were equally divided between men and women. With respect to academic rank, there were 33 Full Professors, 20 Associate Professors, and 17 Assistant Professors. The distribution of interviewed faculty by division was as follows: 2 from Fine Arts, 13 from the Humanities, 14 from the

Life Sciences, 9 from the Physical Sciences, 20 from the Social Sciences, and 12 from Professional Schools.

Interviews took place at a variety of locations with the vast majority being conducted at the faculty member's office. Nonetheless some interviews were conducted in other locations, including restaurants and the waiting room of a hospital. The topics discussed in the interviews covered four major areas:

- Demographic information;
- Work and other life priorities (e.g., how faculty prioritize the various demands on their time and energy); sources of stress; ways of replenishing themselves;
- Areas of possible conflict between personal values and institutional values and practices, including issues of personal authenticity; and
- The role of spirituality in the faculty member's life: how it is experienced, how it is nourished. (see Appendix for a more detailed description of areas covered in interviews)

Most interviews lasted one hour. At the end of the interview faculty were also invited to e-mail or write to share any additional comments or reflections. However, very few additional comments or responses were received subsequent to the interviews.

The interviews were conducted by the two principal investigators, one consultant (a psychologist), and three advanced graduate students. All interviews (except 3) were tape recorded and transcribed, and the narrative data were thematically coded under the major subheads covered in the interview and reported here.

Major Findings

"Spirituality means deep connections with people."
"Spiritual release. . . gives meaning to life, it gives meaning to what we do."
—faculty interviewees

All interviewers were impressed by the richness of the raw data obtained in most interview sessions. The research team's first major task, therefore, was to devise a system for organizing and synthesizing the information into a coherent form. A series of debriefing and brainstorming sessions was held during which the interviewers suggested various taxonomic approaches to organizing the information and summarizing the results. Next, five of the interviewers independently wrote reports in which the major findings from his/her interviews were synthesized and summarized, together with appropriate verbatim quotes to illustrate various points and conclusions. Six such reports[1] were prepared and submitted to one of us (AWA) for the development of the first draft of the final report of results. What follows is a revised and edited version of that overall summary. The findings will be summarized under the following broad headings: Spirituality and Meaning, Value Conflicts, Authenticity, and Sources of Stress.

Spirituality and Meaning

Questions about spirituality generated a tremendous diversity of responses. Some faculty members viewed their entire professional life as an expression of their spirituality, whereas others had difficulty finding any connection between their spiritual and work lives. A few others simply did not see themselves as spiritual beings. Some of this latter group found it easier to talk instead about "meaning" in their work lives.

As one might expect from academicians, a number of respondents would ask for an explanation or definition of "spirituality" before attempting to explain the role of spirituality in their personal lives or work. Since many faculty associate spirituality with organized religion, they would initially

[1] The sixth report was written by Jennifer Lindholm, a graduate student, who was also involved with the transcriptions of some of the interviews.

respond with something like "I'm not very religious." When we assured them that we had no specific definition of the term, or when we inquired as to what about their work gives them a sense of purpose and meaning, most faculty were able to respond.

In this section we will illustrate some of the many ways in which faculty members express their spirituality and find meaning in their work, and then discuss some of the facilitators and obstacles to the expression of spirituality that they encountered at their institutions.

Expressions of Spirituality

Many faculty, especially (but not exclusively) in the research universities, saw their research as a medium either for expressing their spirituality or for finding meaning in their professional lives. Many other respondents saw their work with students as a spiritual activity. Still others expressed their sense of spirituality in church activities, community service work, or even child rearing.

The largest number of faculty members found spiritual expression in their work with students. Not surprisingly, these kinds of responses were more common in the private liberal arts college. Some typical examples:

> "I just consider spirituality not just organized religion…[it's] a sense of connectedness with other human beings …Teaching provides me with a kind of spiritual sense of connectedness."
>
> "And so all of my spirituality, which I believe is fairly strong and fairly deep, comes across in one-on-one interactions. That I treat my students exactly like they want to be treated, I think is part of the spiritual experience for students and for me that they are no less a person than I am…To be a mentor is part of that spiritual experience for them, because some of them are not religious, but that doesn't make it any less important for them. And for those who are religious…I need to be there for them at a different level and I need to be there as a religious guide…a spiritual guide for them when they have questions."
>
> "Teaching is more than a job. It is a service and a vocation…I'm fulfilled if I can give something to the community."
>
> "[Spirituality comes from making students]…more lively, self-aware citizens of the world."

Following are some typical examples of the many ways in which faculty members expressed their spirituality through their scholarly work:

> "I don't know what greater respect I could pay to a creator than to be so interested in the world that lives. I have had members of my church up in a tree looking at the stars on a camping trip! And then I carry out my studies and my interest here at my job and I'm still in awe of the same thing and so if there's any spirituality, then I guess I'm exercising it to some degree when I see the biological world as being amazing and beautiful and I'm very fortunate to be studying its parts and pieces and learning about it.
>
> "The universe is full of these great mysteries and the human mind is one of them and I'm getting paid to investigate that. It's just incredibly exciting in that way. It's almost a kind of spiritual thing. I mean, I'm an atheist, but the universe is out there and it works according to a set of laws and my beliefs in the lawfulness of nature you could say is in some way comparable to being with God."
>
> "You get in a certain setting and see something as simple as a cheetah running or birds skimming across the water and you say, 'this is just amazing, this fantastic thing that I am witnessing.'"
>
> "In terms of spirituality…it means deep connections with people, emotional connections. It means the ability to reflect. I find, actually, spirituality in science which is kind of a connection. It's the search for the truth."
>
> "I think to me, when the work is interesting, that there is—I don't think [something necessarily] spiritual, but there is a sense of losing yourself in the work, which is close to spiritual, which I like."
>
> "There is a spiritual element that I am seeing more now… it's embodied by something that is going on with the Luther King public education program [I helped design]. It has caught the public's imagination. It was heavy to participate in that because we had touched the public at a spiritual level."

Several faculty members expressed their sense of spirituality as occurring simultaneously in their work with students *and* their research:

> "I'm spiritual defined in a very broad sense. Awestruck is probably a more appropriate term...What nature is and what we are presented in the universe. It's feelings of awe that can become one part of spirituality. And the awe goes in all directions. The awe of the intricacies by which nature has arranged for elementary particles to form matter and that's always, I think, always driven me as a scientist...feelings of amazement, of course, are accompanied by excitement about learning...The challenge is to try to give students a glimpse of the awe that one can have."
>
> "I have very strong values that people shouldn't just take up space on earth and that they should contribute to society. And I think educating the populous is a tremendously valuable job and doing research is valuable as well. So I'm doing at least two things that are very valuable."

A number of other faculty members see their spirituality strictly in terms of service or social activism:

> "The issue with spirituality for me...took place with a group of women that I work with...The second part of spirituality comes out of both having been on the civil rights project and also work that I've done about the role the church plays in African American women's lives."
>
> "My spirituality is renewed at a service that I lead...at a retirement home and I do that service in the early morning and then run over to my normal church and do the service there...I don't know what they're getting spiritually. Many of them who come, I think, actually are getting something spiritually, but most of them are getting a religious or spiritual renewal because there's somebody there who cares. We go and we hug, we talk and hand shake and we have a church service."
>
> "I believe that God works through each of us...and each of us are here to help each other. Each of us in our own way, then, serve the other...Spiritual release...gives the meaning to life. It gives the meaning to what we do."

A professor at one of the research universities saw his research specifically as a form of service:

> "As far [back] as I can tell, I was interested in being an astronomer—certainly as soon as I knew what an astronomer was—and I have always wanted to make a contribution toward an advancement of the human race, which in my very prosaic point of view means increasing the base of knowledge, intellectual exploration as well as space exploration."

One interesting aspect of our discussions of spirituality is that nearly all respondents focused on external "good works" involved with teaching, research, social activism, and community service. Only a few discussed spirituality in terms of "inner" development. One such faculty member, for example, expressed her spirituality through a Buddhist meditation group in which she was a regular participant. Another professor at a research university saw his inner spiritual development in terms of his writing:

> "I have quite a strong and, I would say, quasi-spiritual sense of mission in terms of the work I have done and am doing right now, and wish to do as a scholar. And it centers around writing, which is for me a fairly spiritual activity actually. It really has to do with finding my sense of who I am, giving it a concrete place to be on—well, on the computer screen—but eventually on a piece of paper."

Another professor at a research university saw her inner spiritual development in terms of formal religious practice and her external spirituality expressed through her work:

> "I believe in God and this belief gives me hope and something to cling to during hard times. And during those hard times I do go to church and also pray at home. Also, the golden rule, which is shared by many religions, is a key to my life and work. I try to follow it, not always successfully. And, while I might not agree with the Catholic Church on a lot of things, it does socialize compassion and that again is something that is important to me and I try to have in my life, teaching, and other aspects of my work."

Meaning and Purpose

Among those respondents who preferred to talk about "meaning" or "purpose" rather than "spirituality," responses were often very similar to what we heard when spirituality was specifically mentioned. A few examples:

> "There are moments when I'm in discussions and lecturing with students where I'm kind of just lost in the ideas. That's one of the things that gives me the greatest pleasure."
>
> "I get a real thrill out of seeing the light come on, and the student finally gets it, you know, that's really a lot of fun for me."
>
> "I love my students. I really do love my students...even when I'm incredibly frustrated with undergraduates, you know, this is better than a lot of other things. And it's important, you know, this is really important...I do still maintain this notion of doing some trifle bit of good in the world, and I think this is really it."
>
> "[I] derive a sense of purpose for my existence. And I like to publish, I like seeing my name in print...my immortality."
>
> "I think about [my work] all the time. While I'm gardening, while I'm walking, while I'm playing tennis...I think my husband may be bored because I talk about it all the time. But I couldn't imagine not having that part of me."

Obstacles to Spiritual Development

Perhaps the most commonly perceived obstacles to spiritual development involve the time pressures (which are discussed at length in the last section):

> "I do think, I'm not just a fleshy being, but I don't know what the other part is. I haven't had time to think about that part very much, but I would like to be more than my fleshy self but I'll worry about that after I get tenure, hopefully."
>
> "[I'm always] rushing from one task to the next; no time for reflection on work or spirituality...no time for spirituality."
>
> "Maybe I don't ask myself the questions because I'm afraid of the answer, which might be, 'hey, throw all of the crap away and do something totally different; maybe that's not what you want to do at all.' You see, I am not taking the time to reflect on questions of life, meaning, and purpose, and that's probably a mistake."

> "It's not to say that I don't believe in the spiritual side of things, but it's not something I spend a lot of time thinking about, just because there are too many other things to think about."

A few faculty members, however, simply rejected the concept of spirituality as being relevant to their life and work:

> "I have a hard time understanding how this country produces so many people who can read scriptures literally, and truly believe that the world is, I don't know, five thousand years old or whatever it is, and you have people who are otherwise reasonably intelligent...how this country breeds fundamentalists, I don't understand."
>
> "Spirituality plays no role in my life and work. I do deal with issues of spirituality in my teaching but mainly to explore the conflict that has existed for the last several centuries between scientific and spiritual explanations for natural phenomena. I expressly discuss how scientists in the last century confronted and conclusively disproved the prevalent spiritual explanations for biological diversity and the origin of species, which has caused some discomfort for a small minority of students."

In short, the way that faculty speak of their spiritual life and development parallels the three dimensions identified by Elkins et al[2] in their article, "Toward a Humanistic-Phenomenological Spirituality:" *Mission in Life* (having a sense of "vocation," a calling, a sense of responsibility); *Altruism* (the need to connect with others—"no man[sic] is an island"—and a sense of caring, of social justice, and of being part of a common humanity); and the *Sacredness of life* (a sense of awe, reverence, and wonder). Regardless of the institution, all three of these themes appeared repeatedly in our interviews with faculty.

FACILITATORS OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Only a few respondents had much to say about factors in their lives that facilitated their spiritual development. In fact, the only specific example came from *outside* academia:

> "I kind of view myself as a very religious person, very involved with family...Sundays I spend with the family and sort

[2] Elkins, D. N., Hedstrom, L. J., Hughes, L. L., Leaf, J. A., & Saunders, C. (1988). Toward a humanistic-phenomenological spirituality: Definition, description, and measurement. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 28, 4, 5-18.

> of church related activities...Religious observance is very important. It teaches me that my family is extremely important, much more important than any of the stuff I do during the day...part of my responsibility is taking care of my family and doing the very best I can at what I do...consistent with my religion to kind of try to excel and do the very best I can."

The fact that the institution was almost never mentioned in the context of facilitating or enhancing spiritual development raises important policy questions that should be explored in much greater depth. Even in the one religiously-affiliated college, institutional policies and practices were seldom seen as facilitative to spiritual development, and several of its faculty told us specifically that their spiritual development was *not* enhanced by these policies and practices. These findings suggest strongly that academic institutions provide few, if any, structures or opportunities for faculty to discuss or otherwise reflect on this very critical aspect of their personal and professional lives.

Value Conflicts

Interviewees were asked to recount experiences where they felt that their own values or principles were at variance with those of their colleagues, their department, their students, or their institution. Such value conflicts frequently turned out to be the source not only of considerable stress (see the last section), but also of problems relating to authenticity and the expression of spirituality. Since authenticity will be discussed in the next section of this report, we will focus here on describing the major value conflicts presented by our respondents.

By far the most frequently cited value conflict at the institutional level was the issue of research versus teaching. Most often this conflict took the form of concerns that pressures to do research were compromising the quality of work with students:

> "The university doesn't reward you...You don't get rewarded at a research university for teaching. It rewards publications. And I'm one of the few who, like, accelerated to tenure. I accelerated through every one of the steps, but to do it, it meant everything else had to be stripped down."
>
> "Undergraduate teaching has deteriorated [among] my priorities. I really love undergraduate teaching, but no one cares about it, really. Nobody cares if you're a fine undergraduate

> teacher or anything like that...I've had to come against that reality...The mental energy that I put into my undergraduate teaching is not what it was when I first came here...People said to me...teaching can only be used to hurt you. That if you're a crappy teacher, but if people like your research, they'll find a way around that somehow...So I've finally taken the message to heart."

Many faculty members express a great deal of ambivalence about this conflict:

> "Teaching, actually I don't mind that much...I do mind, because it sort of takes time away from personal research...I'd rather do research than eat, or anything, so it's a nuisance in that it takes time away."
>
> "Choices have to be made and I still haven't sorted that out...My top priority is research, but I'm not sure it should be. One thing that's clear is that the university prioritizes research and if the university were to properly appreciate the value of teaching and service I would perhaps...be able to prioritize that more highly."

The most stark conflict of values is the faculty's experience and perception of how little their commitment to students and pedagogy and service to the institution is valued by other colleagues within the research university:

> "...my colleagues regard me as...having bad judgment for spending so much time on issues like education. They'll go, 'why are you wasting your time. You should be finishing that [writing] effort and not wasting so much time on general education.' And sometimes I'll buy into that and think, 'yes, I regret.' But not really, I don't regret. In a good moment, I think that all of this is worth while."

A closely related form of value conflict that was mentioned by a few interviewees concerned the competition between teaching and administrative work:

> "I, quite frankly, was told if there's an important committee meeting, you cut your class. You cancel it. If there's an important committee meeting, you just cut your office hours... I was a pretty good lecturer and I enjoyed the ego gratification

> of giving a good lecture in front of a good audience. So I found it deprived me of gratification and I thought it violated the basis for my being at the university, which was teaching."

Another major area of value conflict was observed at the private college, the only one of our four institutions that had a formal affiliation with a church. Some typical examples:

> "There's a kind of tension that I feel sometimes here where students—some students—claim they feel religion is crammed down their throats."
>
> "They want to be a Christian school but they're too expensive. So they have to take a very large clientele of non-Christians. Then they try to be Christian and there's too many competing issues. They do have daily chapel...[which is] poorly attended. Faculty just don't have the time. They have convocation...[which] 12 years ago was really a religious service ...and is now nothing more than different sociopolitical religious agendas."
>
> "We will hire a certain religious group before we hire quality and that's disturbing from the academician point of view that I may have to work with people who are not as qualified as my neighbors...and in natural science we're probably more conscious of that because in this church there just are not that many physical scientists."
>
> "...[Their] hiring criteria are at times based on being a church school; one of their criteria is church membership. And I don't believe in that. I believe that people are people and what their faith is it is up to them, and I realize the importance of people who say hooray for our side or our denomination, I appreciate that, but I don't myself; to me that's a private matter, it's not something that I pick my friends around."

Personal Authenticity

Authenticity, in the context of this study, means behaving in a way that is consistent with one's personal beliefs and values. When asked directly about authenticity, however, many of our interviewees encountered some difficulty in recalling instances where they felt they had behaved in an *in*authentic way.

While this general finding could be interpreted to mean that faculty members generally find they can lead authentic lives within academia, many of the quotations already given in the preceding section on "Value Conflicts" *imply* a good deal of inauthenticity. Apparently, many faculty members find it difficult to acknowledge openly that they have not behaved in a manner consistent with their most deeply felt values and beliefs. Such an interpretation would certainly be consistent with the considerable amount of stress that faculty members report in their professional lives and with the tremendous time pressures that force so many of them to make compromises with their work and personal lives (see the section on Stress, below).

Following are several examples of personal inauthenticity related to the peer review process:

> "I also wanted my colleagues to vote positively on my tenure decision, so I didn't want them to think that I don't have my life together and that I'm miserable and not productive. For them to know that I was an emotional wreck would not be a good thing. So I had to put on this face and pretend...At this particular junction when they're looking at me and deciding whether they want to keep this person for the rest of her career as a colleague and you see her having a hard time, well you think less of her."
>
> "So why can't we [be authentic]? It's because we're talking about people's work which is the integral part of their being."

A few faculty members also mentioned that they were sometimes inauthentic in their teaching and grading practices:

> "I really find myself making compromises I'm not pleased with. It seems to jeopardize my sense of integrity. I have changed grading criteria so that a certain number of students get this grade, a certain number get that grade...I find that students want to be entertained...And that's not the kind of person I am. Were that the kind of person I am, I'd be in Hollywood, not an institution like this. So obviously I'm struggling with that perfect medium of being an entertainer as well as a teacher."
>
> "I have struggled quite a lot this year with insecurity about what I have to offer to my students, and I struggle a lot with the impostor syndrome...I've had...difficulty this year feeling like a whole person in terms of being a professor."

Another faculty member encountered problems with authenticity in carrying out her administrative work:

> "Every chair who has a difficult faculty member as a colleague has to lie in some sense to keep it rolling since the job is to incorporate that person even though you may think yourself that it's not worth it. And since you can't make anyone on an academic faculty do anything they don't want to do, you just end up repeating the truth in a way different from the way it is...just to kind of make it look like it's working."

Still another respondent saw himself as inauthentic because he was sticking with a job that he really felt he should leave:

> "...The stuff I'm doing here today is not what I'd rather be doing. Do you know what I mean? Stuff that's inside this building is not my passion. I mean, this building has allowed me to bring in the grants and do what my passion is but...[I should leave because] I don't need the stability that some people really need in their lives."

A number of respondents willingly cited examples where they felt that they were behaving in an authentic way, where their values and those of their colleagues or their institution were congruent:

> "I'm not sophisticated enough to be inauthentic...I often wish I could, but I just am not. That is who I am, and it's always been that way, and it hasn't always served me well, but like I said, I'm just not sophisticated enough to pull it off. So I am very authentic, integrated. I am who I am across the board and I don't have any problems with that."
>
> "My values are very closely aligned with the values of the department and the administration on the question of diversity...[it] is something that this school is really committed to and really seeing the university's role as bettering the community and not just as this kind of ivory tower institution concerned with prestige and things, but really reaching out to common America and bettering their lives through education...Yes, this is the kind of institution I want to be at. The things they talk about really resonate to me and so, in that sense, I really feel good about it."

> "I'm trying to be authentic because I feel it just doesn't do me any good not to be authentic, and I am just who I am, and always like to tell my graduate students that my life here is proof that there's room in the profession for the disorganized, the always late...And so, you know, people [make remarks]. Well, they just have to live with that or not, they can fire me."

At the private Christian college, a substantial portion of the faculty interviewees expressed strong feelings of authenticity based on the religious nature of the campus climate and the strong institutional commitment to students:

> "There's an openness here that if we chose to express our spirituality in some of the classrooms, you know, that's going to be acceptable at least among our colleagues."
>
> "It's a match for me. I love it here. I love the focus on teaching. I love the closeness to the students. I love the smallness. I like the sense of community. All of those are very big positives for me."
>
> "Family's important and that's very accepted [here]. Those things are important...I do believe that people from poor backgrounds need more help, so that's what I'm trying to do...And, of course, it takes longer. So our 'diamonds in the rough' may not be the best students...but by the time they leave as seniors, they're good. They can hold their own...So I'm happy that my values in this department are realized. We have faculty who are dedicated to taking these 'diamonds in the rough' and making them really well polished individuals who will do well when they get out into the larger world and also will be agents for social change."
>
> "One thing I really enjoy about teaching at a Christian university is that I can talk about these [religious] things...It's not a taboo subject...I can talk about faith or spiritual things, and it's not like you're weird."

In short, it appears that faculty find it easier to feel authentic in those instances where there is a good fit between their own values and those of the institution, e.g., believing in the importance of equity in an institution that strives to admit a diverse student body and stresses multiculturalism, caring deeply about students in an institution that places a high priority on

undergraduate education, and having strong religious beliefs in an institution that supports the expression of spiritual values.

Sources of Stress

Most of the interviewees reported a substantial amount of stress in their professional lives, and many indicated that the overall level of this stress was considerable. As already noted, stress proved to be a significant component of several of the other basic issues already covered in this report: value conflicts, maintaining authenticity, finding meaning and expressing spirituality.

The central role of stress is perhaps to be expected, given that most of the personal interviews began by initially focusing on sources of stress in the faculty member's life. Even so, the extensiveness and intensity of the stress reported by many faculty members indicates that the finding of widespread stress is not simply an artifact of our interviewing procedures. In any event, we shall examine the sources of stress in the faculty member's life in the following domains: time pressures, family/personal life, teaching, research, administrative responsibility, colleagues, and the institutional context/climate.

TIME PRESSURES

Virtually every interview underscored one basic fact about faculty life: faculty members simply do not feel that they have enough time to meet all of their professional and personal responsibilities. In part this sense of not having enough time reflects the reality that faculty members in American colleges and universities are called upon to perform multiple tasks, and that there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding how much time and energy faculty should devote to each of these tasks. As an interviewee in one of the research universities noted, "It's the kind of job you can work at 24 hours a day and never feel you've done enough." Or, as a faculty member in the other research university remarked, "there are too many conflicting demands. You're expected to be an outstanding researcher, an outstanding teacher, and an outstanding citizen in the field of your scholarship." The negative effects of these time pressures on the life of the faculty member are dramatically illustrated by the following quotes from two of the faculty at the state university:

> "Until this January I worked almost every night and every weekend. Last year I took three weekends that I did not work on academic stuff the entire academic year. That's how it's been, and I just can't do it any more. Inside me I can't, I'm dried up.

I'm, exhausted...I think being a teacher shouldn't preclude having a life."

"The only quiet time I get is two hours a day sitting on the freeway...Pathetic. I get time in my car by myself where I can't do work and I sort of vegetate for an hour in each direction."

Similar sentiments were offered by faculty at the research universities:

"I don't know how people do it all: write the grants, do the research, write the papers, teach courses, meet students. It's just a lot of time. A lot of time."

"At this point in my life, I feel like I'm doing a half-assed job of everything because I don't have enough time to do anything properly and I'm a perfectionist."

As they were reflecting on these time pressures, several interviewees remarked that they thought that the pressures were, to a certain extent, self-imposed:

"I'm probably my biggest stressor. I have things I want to accomplish, I have things I want to do. The biggest stressor for me is what I can imagine versus what I can actually do."

"...It's a very different kind of stress. First of all, I think most of us love what we do, and so most of the stress is sort of self-imposed, kind of drive to accomplish, a drive to get as much done as possible...to get as much done and published as possible..."

The time pressures that give rise to all of this stress seem to reflect an important reality about academia: the typical professor has literally dozens of challenging responsibilities, but it is very unclear as to how much time and energy should be devoted to each of these responsibilities. Thus, while the general public and many legislators tend to think about the academic world in simplistic terms such as course "loads," faculty members are required to perform a great many other tasks besides the obvious ones of teaching, research, and writing. These other tasks include preparing lectures, holding office hours, grading papers and exams, advising and mentoring students, writing letters of recommendation for current and former students, developing new courses, reading the latest research in the field, writing research grants, serving as an informal consultant or advisor to institutional colleagues, serving on any number of committees and task forces, preparing written reviews of the work of other faculty members both within the institution and from other institutions,

reviewing manuscripts for peer-review journals, serving in various capacities within professional associations, and performing a wide variety of other miscellaneous administrative duties for the department or institution. The basic problem is that there is really no control over the *amount* of such work that individual faculty members are called upon to perform, nor does that work get much, if any, weight in the personnel review process, no matter how much of it a faculty member does and regardless of its quality.

Perhaps the clearest expression of the stress produced by multiple responsibilities and limited time comes from a senior professor at the private college:

> "Yes I'm stressed. Ten years ago I had a heart problem and ended up with five by-passes, and part of it was stress…Time is always the problem…Every one of us should do more things, and the problem is how, how do we fit it all in?…Everything always takes a little more time than you planned. I mean, I'll be honest with you, you always think 'I can get this done, I can get this done, I can get this done' and you don't figure in the fact that something else will come along that takes more time. If one is successful on committees then one should go on more committees. And at times my wife has said, "why are you on this committee?" And I said, "well some of them I believe in."…So time is a big thing, you're always coming in with a plan, trying to maximize, get as much accomplished as you can."

Competition Between Work and Family Life

Faculty in all four institutions spoke about the various ways in which work demands interfere with personal and family life. For many younger faculty this competition gets resolved on the side of scholarship:

> "I've heard faculty say, 'well, my family comes first and so therefore if I don't do as much research as I think I should or I'd like to do, that's just tough. That's OK.'…I haven't gotten there in my life. I keep feeling that I have to be producing, you know, and I want to…But there is the guilt factor of not being able to spend as much time with my son as I'd like to."
>
> "You're getting me at the time when I'm feeling overwhelmed. I've been feeling overwhelmed for the past six months. As my [messy] office testifies to that…I have too much work…I haven't been able to see my kids lately. I haven't been

able to see the grand kids. I haven't been able to visit back home. It seems like things have gotten away from me."

Some faculty members have responded to these pressures by limiting their engagement in scholarly work:

"Realistically speaking, I'm not going to live long enough to double my scientific production. So the question is whether the amount of effort and sacrifice to my daughter...is going to be worth it. I don't plan on starting anything major until I get my daughter through grade school...That may mean I may not ever undertake another project...The one thing I am sure of is that I don't want to cut into my daughter's life any more than I have."

Conflicts between work and family responsibilities are especially acute for those women faculty who have small children:

"My child is three and that certainly has changed my life in wonderful ways. But before I had a child, I worked probably 12-hour days. I can't do that any more because the day care centers are not open 12-hours a day. And I wouldn't want my child to be in day care 12 hours a day."

"My biggest conflict, the conflict that I experience nowadays...on a daily basis, always has to do with juggling the family and work. You know, can you fit it all in that particular day? So everyday it's different, but it's always the same sort of conflict."

Research and Publication

Probably the most interesting source of stress associated with scholarly work is the uncertainty about what constitutes "enough" publication and what constitutes "quality" research. Following are typical quotes from research university faculty members:

"I think that's a bad thing about academics in general, that you always feel like you should be working towards, you know, towards something else. Because I really found this is a 'what have you done for me lately' sort of profession, so you don't get to rest on your laurels for very long, if ever."

"So you always have to be working on something and doing something and making progress and all that. I'm

> incredibly envious of my friends who are not academics because when they come home at night, that's it...You're never away from it because there really isn't any time that is yours...The university owns my life now."
>
> "You have to produce continually to get promoted. And it's exacerbated by being in a system where rewards are based, in part, on prestige, which is not easily defined."
>
> "Maybe I'm just getting to this phase of life where I'm tired of doing research because other people think it's important."

Even the professors at the private college feel the pressure:

> "Although the criteria are research, teaching, and service, you can get through without the service, but you're not going to get through without the research, and so every spare moment I have I'm going to do the research."

Other sources of research-related stress, most frequently encountered in the research universities, included the work involved in submitting grant proposals, dealing with funding agencies, and managing research grants. All of these responsibilities were seen as distracting the faculty member from other activities (especially research and writing).

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

While research and teaching were often seen in a positive light by interviewees, administrative work was almost always mentioned either as a source of stress or in some other negative context. Most faculty, it would seem, resent administrative work because it (a) consumes a great deal of time and energy; (b) is frequently contentious and frustrating; (c) is not valued to any extent in the reward system; and (d) "doesn't seem to serve any useful purpose." A typical quote from a faculty member in the private college:

> "There's a tremendous amount of committee work... You're expected to participate. So every time there's a committee meeting, that fractures the day just as much as a class does..."

Even more blunt are the comments of two faculty members from the research universities:

> "Doing this crap when you ask yourself 'who benefits?' And the answer is, 'no person benefits.' It's not me. It's not any person I can identify. A lot of this garbage that we have to do is

just self-perpetuating. It just, frankly, exists so that other people, maybe not necessarily competent people, could have jobs which shouldn't necessarily exist."

"[Committee meetings] are the scourge of academe."

Students and Teaching

Not surprisingly, faculty at the two institutions that are strongly oriented toward teaching undergraduates—the private college and the state university—were much more likely than were the research university professors to cite students as a source of stress. By far the most commonly mentioned source of such stress was associated with what many faculty saw as the poor academic preparation of many of their students:

"...Compromising standards...I'm teaching in the fall and I judge the students to be about third-grade reading level because they keep saying the test is too difficult to read...That matter of compromising standards...So one kind of stress is that kind of battle with students."

"It's not everybody, of course, but it's a very high percentage that can't read analytically and they can't match picture to word...and I don't know how to fix that. I'm not sure I'm supposed to fix it. I'm an educator in the postsecondary system, so I'm not sure if that's my job to fix that but I've got to figure out a way to touch the students without sacrificing content."

"I think my good students have been short changed by the not-so-great students who have been tugging at me...I don't think these are students who shouldn't have been here in the first place. And so then you have an obligation to help them get through and I'm not sure that you should. And so I think the past few weeks it's been really tough letting these students pass."

"It's also embarrassing to put these students up in front of your colleagues and say, you know, I've done what I can."

A problem closely related to underpreparation is lack of motivation:

"But students coming in with 60 percent on all of their homework, 60 percent on all of their exams, and are belligerent in class! You can't tell me that it's my fault. Start taking some responsibility for your own life, please. If it weren't for everything else that I do, I could go crazy on that kind of thing.

> It would be easy just to throw up my hands and say, industry is a great place to be, and leave."

Some faculty who teach in the state university experienced difficulty in attempting to teach the many older, working students who enroll:

> "The students need so much mentoring. It's a second career for many people. They don't have a lot of money. They've got a lot of demands on their time. They don't know what to do. They don't know what their career objectives are going to be."

Other related problems mentioned by several interviewees included difficulties in "negotiating boundaries" and "setting limits" with students. Several interviewees also cited student evaluations as source of stress:

> "I think most faculty in my position would be stressed out mentally not just about research, but also by teaching evaluations. That's a major source of concern."
>
> "...Let's say you're having a difficult time in the classroom, there's nothing more debilitating than having all these students write nasty notes about you and criticize your performance..."

Finally, several faculty in the state university mentioned teaching loads as a significant source of stress, comparing their teaching loads (unfavorably) with the lighter loads enjoyed by faculty in the neighboring research university.

Tenure and the Peer Review Process

Some of the most passionate statements related to stress occurred in discussions of the personnel review process, especially tenure decisions. The tenure process is highly stressful for most assistant professors, regardless of which institution they work in. The specific objections to the tenure process cover a wide range of issues, including ambiguous and uncertain standards and expectations, bias, and petty politics. One assistant professor in the midst of her tenure review noted that she was unable to do much of anything in the years leading up to tenure decision except prepare for that decision. She had given up all sports and cultural activities and stopped going to restaurants and the theater. She basically stopped doing anything but physics. Following is just a sampling of typical comments from several other faculty about the stressful nature of the tenure/promotion process:

> "Decisions appear to be arbitrary. You do, you do, you do. You're meeting all of the hoops and ringing all of the right bells

> and then a decision will go against you and nobody will give you a rational reason for it."
>
> "The tenure committee wants to keep the details somewhat nebulous. Not because, I think, they're trying to be unfair and unscrupulous about things but because they want to have the opportunity to adapt and to shift things around. But on the other hand, from my side of, it creates anxiety."
>
> "Since [expectations]...are vague and ambiguous and contingent, the natural tendency is just to inflate them...all out of proportion."
>
> "If there's was a place for stress it's probably in promotion policies and that's probably where most people would put most of their stress...I like to be with students, so the teaching and the research, that's all fairly low stress. The killer is tenuous promotion decisions that don't make sense."

On several occasions faculty saw the tenure process as a source of stress because there was *not enough* rigor:

> "It's very frustrating. We had a promotion to tenure recently that was not based on the merits of the research and it was clearly a political battle and the person got tenure and they didn't belong here...We're a top ten department and I don't know of another top ten department that would have done that...I just think it's sad that we compromised our standards."

COLLEAGUES AS A SOURCE OF STRESS

The tenure and promotion process clearly provides one venue for collegial stress, but there are many other ways in which academic colleagues constitute a source of stress for each other. Interviewees frequently complained about the conflicts, politicking, power struggles, and expressions of ill-will that they encountered in their collegial relationships. Some faculty were inclined to attribute this general lack of collegiality to the high level of individualism and competitiveness that is encouraged within the faculty ranks, especially in research universities. One professor in one of the research universities noted that, unlike industry or the corporate world, where teamwork and cooperation are required in order for the company to be successful and productive, academics do not need (and tend not) to be very good team players. In a research university, a faculty member can be "successful" while being arrogant,

narcissistic, and uncompromising. Such negative personalities are tolerated in the academy, whereas their poor social skills would probably force them out of other job environments. A typical comment:

> "...Maybe it's because the faculty are also opinionated and nobody really wants to work together and we really don't want to talk about what we're doing to make change together."

Paradoxically, the fear of devastating collegial criticism can sometimes produce the opposite sort of stress, namely, that colleagues restrain themselves even from giving constructive kinds of criticism:

> "In a small department there is rarely overt disagreement...Nobody says anything bad...It's because we're talking about peoples' work which is an integral part of their being...If someone just says, 'this is absolutely garbage,' it's not just an attack on your work. So that's maybe what inhibits us."

Institutional Context/Climate

All the interviewers were struck by the importance of institutional climate or context in generating various kinds of stresses. Our four institutions were highly diverse in certain respects, and this diversity often proved to be a major factor in shaping the particular stresses experienced by faculty members. In the large public institutions, for example, impersonality, individualism, and competitiveness contribute to a general lack of collegiality. In the private college, the strong church affiliation produces a variety of stresses for certain faculty, especially in the hiring process.

In one of the research universities, which operates its undergraduate program on a "collegiate" model, some faculty experienced stress as a consequence of the ambiguous identification of the institution: Is it primarily a research university, or is it primarily an undergraduate institution focusing on students? By contrast, in both the state university and the private college, a certain amount of stress was associated with the fact that the leadership in these institutions was placing an increasing emphasis on research. At the private college this change was attributed by some faculty members to "the desire for increased prestige." A recurring theme in the interviews at the state university was to make comparisons with a neighboring major research university. While these comparisons were occasionally favorable ("we have much less stress around research expectations"), they more often related to felt pressures to emulate the neighboring major research university:

> "The biggest problem here is that we would like to think of ourselves as a major research university where we do substantial research, but that runs head on into a teaching load that is officially four to six times as high as a major research university. And let's face it, no matter how good you are, you aren't that much better than the guys at Berkeley that you can afford to teach six times as much and keep up with good research. It just isn't realistic."

Effects of Stress

Our respondents reported a wide range of negative reactions to stress, including a variety of health problems, divorce, over consumption of caffeine, and sleep deprivation:

> "I want to do a really good job in every facet of what I do here at the university...[but] I need more than the 24 hours in a day...I've ended up over the years sacrificing sleep and sleeping four or five hours a night and that's not satisfactory. I don't do as good a job at anything I do because of that. And I'm in a rut."

One female assistant professor remarked that her life was "very much in turmoil," and that she was seeing an acupuncturist for back pain who told her, "you know, this is really emotional at heart. You really need to see a therapist to deal with some of this."

Coping with Stress

Faculty interviewees employed a variety of techniques and strategies to cope with stress: "Letting go," staying away from conflict (or, as one respondent remarked, "avoiding negativity") maintaining a sense of purpose, putting things off, better time management, and prioritizing personal and professional goals:

> "If I really get fed up, I just forget committee meetings... There's something that occurs in me that says, 'I'm going to focus in on the development of this proposal' or 'I'm developing a better course.' And all the other switches go off, you know, and I just don't care."

A related strategy is simply to accept limits:

> "As important as you may want to be you somehow have to realize that we're all infinitely unimportant and all of us are infinitely replaceable. You just kind of have to not allow yourself to feel insignificant in the work that you do. Even though you don't accomplish all that you want, you have to at the same time not let that stop you from doing what you can do."

Still another strategy is to "draw a line between work and family":

> "Unless there is some enormous deadline that I absolutely have to work at home on something, then...I feel that it's healthy for me to keep a line where I separate from work and what helps me do that is to go pick up my son and ask him how he's doing and ask him about things and I just switch modes... I compartmentalize my work. My research is at home, my service and teaching are here."

Some respondents rely on organizations such as the church:

> "There's little time left over on a weekly basis to devote to spiritual issues. That's the reason why I look at the church, in a way, as a kind of crutch."

Still other respondents rely on hobbies as a source of stress reduction:

> "When it really gets bad and I'm just having a crummy day with students in the classroom or I have a belligerent class or the class is just not super talented, I also have my woodshop, and I go and make children's toys, or I'll make furniture or something like that, I do a little bit of cabinetry. So I eliminate stress before it tries to kill me, because it's so easy."

But perhaps the most interesting approach was summed up by this faculty member:

> "I don't feel the same stresses that other people do, I don't think. Partially it is just the personality. I set out when I first started teaching, I told the person who hired me that every day has to be playtime for me. When it quits being playtime, I quit. And that was 12 years ago, and it's still playtime every day."

Sources of Renewal

Faculty members relied on a wide range of techniques to renew themselves from the stresses and disconnections that they often confronted in their academic work. By far the most common source had to do with physical activity such as exercise or spending time outdoors gardening, walking in the forest, or going to the beach. Other techniques included musical and artistic activities (playing the piano, painting), reading for pleasure, catching up on sleep, sabbatical leaves, and taking time for meditation and/or reflection:

> "The quiet time just to myself is renewing. Renewal for me is an active thing. A lot of people get very introspective and they spend time in prayer, which I do, but they spend time in really consolidated study, which I don't do as much...so for me, it's very active, I have to do something, so when I do something and I see success I feel very good about it. And when I see that it doesn't work, then I get introspective, what do I need to do to make it work."

Despite the fact that many faculty saw their family responsibilities as exacerbating the stress that they experienced at work, a few faculty members also saw the family as a source of renewal:

> "I think my sustenance comes mainly from my wife, my family, my children. It's always a pleasure for me to go back home again at the end of the day no matter how late or how early or even if that's a half hour or 15 minutes I get with my sons, you know...I also take time off on week-ends religiously to spend time with the family."

Some faculty members felt that they were renewed by the social support that they experienced doing collaborative research. One faculty member gets a sense of renewal simply from *completing* research work:

> "When I've got that paper done and I send it off I feel that the time has been well spent and I see my results, and that's what renews me."

Most faculty, in fact, cited several sources of renewal. A typical example:

> "I get to go home...I'll play with my baby or whatever, and on weekends I dive or we do a lot of different things. Maintaining diversity outside of what I do to make money is probably one of the best stress therapies there is."

Summary and Conclusions

While it is difficult to get a real "feel" for what we found without reading at least some of the verbatim statements that we have included with this report, we will try here first to summarize the major findings under three broad headings: Spirituality, Authenticity, and Stress.

A. Spirituality

- Almost all faculty interviewees were able and willing to speak openly about the role of either "spirituality" or "meaning and purpose" in their professional and personal lives.
- Many respondents, especially in the research universities, expressed their spirituality through their scholarly work.
- Other avenues of expression included teaching and working with students, community service, social activism, church activities, and child-rearing.
- While most faculty expressed their spirituality in such "external" activities, only a handful reported using "internal" approaches such as prayer, reflection, and meditation.

B. Authenticity

- Many faculty members report conflicts between their own values and those of their institutions, the most frequent being the devaluing of work with students in order to fulfill expectations for research and scholarly achievement.
- While most faculty interviewees found it difficult to acknowledge that they experienced "inauthenticity" in their work life, their accounts of "value conflicts" imply a good deal of inauthenticity in (a) reconciling teaching responsibilities with research demands; (b) performing administrative work that they see as a waste of time; (c) sacrificing personal

research interests in order to carry out research which will receive collegial approval; (d) not fulfilling family responsibilities in order to meet institutional expectations; and (e) not giving colleagues honest criticism of their work.

C. STRESS

- Most college and university faculty are experiencing a substantial amount of job stress.
- Much of this stress is a consequence of the faculty member's perception that there is simply not enough available time to perform well all the diverse tasks and meet the many responsibilities that are associated with it.
- These felt time pressures are especially severe for those faculty members who have spouses and small children.
- Student-related stress is most often associated with teaching underprepared students.
- Collegial-related stress is most often associated with the peer review process, especially tenure decisions.
- Issues relating to family responsibilities and stresses related to the tenure process are especially acute for women faculty.
- Engaging in committee and other administrative work is frequently experienced as stressful, not only because such activities take time away from teaching and research, but also because they are seen as unimportant and even unnecessary.

Next Steps in Research

Our research team had the distinct impression that (a) the interviewees *wanted* to talk about issues of meaning, purpose, and spirituality, and (b) the institutions where they worked provided few, if any opportunities for such conversations. In our one church-related college, faculty were generally pleased that spirituality was not considered a taboo topic and frequently surfaced as a discussion topic in the classroom, but many faculty felt that frank collegial discussions of such issues were severely constrained by what was seen as a strong (and sometimes oppressive) denominational bias.

While many faculty members commented that we were inquiring about personal matters that they "virtually never" talk about with colleagues, no interviewees refused to talk about these issues and most seemed almost to welcome the opportunity. That our interviews were exploring territory that needs much more attention in academe was suggested by the many spontaneous comments we received at the end of our interviews:

> "Actually, it's very cathartic to be able to talk about these things."
>
> "It was actually a good experience for myself also."
>
> "I've enjoyed the conversation very much, 'cause I think about these things a lot and I don't get to talk about them too much."

Future research in this area could advance our understanding of these issues in a variety of ways through the use of a wider variety of data collection approaches and by including a greater diversity of institutions. For example, future interviews should inquire more directly into faculty members' views about issues such as the folllowing: ways in which institutional policy and practice facilitates or inhibits student and faculty exploration of issues relating to spirituality, authenticity, meaning, and purpose; examples of inauthentic behavior in students and colleagues; and their degree of personal interest in having more institutional attention devoted to these issues.

Another important issue that needs to be examined in greater depth is student underpreparation. A number of faculty in both the private college and the state university expressed frustration and ambivalence about teaching their less-well-prepared students. Giving the large number of such students and the great national importance of being able to educate them well, future research needs to take a much closer look not only at how well we prepare college faculty for teaching underprepared students, but also at the academic reward system as it relates to teaching such students.

One of the ironies about our interviews is that none of our 70 faculty members commented on the obvious connection between the questions we were asking, on the one hand, and the traditional goals of a "liberal education," on the other. Thus even though the goal of "self-understanding" or "to know thyself" is at the heart of liberal learning (not to mention most of the great philosophical traditions), none of the interviewees appeared to see the connection between our questions—which were clearly concerned with issues of self-understanding, personal values, authenticity, meaning and purpose, spirituality—and the goals of liberal learning. Clearly, in future studies faculty should be encouraged to discuss these issues in terms of their implications for students, curriculum content, and pedagogy.

Finally, given the tentative findings suggesting the crucial role of institutional *context*, we believe that the institutional sample should be diversified to include other geographic regions, community colleges, private universities, nonsectarian private colleges and a much greater variety of denominational colleges (especially Roman Catholic colleges and colleges affiliated with other Christian denominations).

Further Work on Spirituality in Higher Education

Our study and the extended dialogues at Fetzer that inspired it have convinced us that there is a need to find new ways to bring about a greater consciousness of issues of meaning and spirituality within our colleges and universities. For the past 18 months the Steering Committee that planned and guided the Fetzer dialogues has sought to identify possible strategies (see below) for enhancing individual authenticity and spirituality and for bringing a greater sense of meaning and purpose into academic work. (See the Appendix for a list of Steering Committee members.)

That there is a readiness, if not an eagerness, within the higher education community to engage these issues was dramatically demonstrated in March of 1998 when members of the Steering Committee hosted a session entitled "Spirituality and Higher Education" at the annual meeting of the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) in Washington. Even though the session was scheduled for 8:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning, it was filled to capacity by the scheduled starting time. The 150 participants, who included faculty, staff, presidents and other administrators from institutions of all types, were seated at tables and asked to discuss a series of questions concerning spirituality, authenticity, fragmentation and meaning in their work. The participants displayed considerable energy and enthusiasm as they engaged the task, and not a single participant left during the two-hour session. A follow up session was scheduled later in the day for those who wanted to continue the dialogue and more than 40 participants returned for that session. Most of the 150 morning participants provided the Steering Committee with their names and e-mail addresses as an expression of their interest in continuing to be engaged in further exploration of these issues.

Since that time the AAHE experience has been replicated, with minor variations, through a series of similar sessions led by members of the Steering Committee at several other national meetings. In addition, one Steering Committee member (Paul Elsner) has begun working with the faculty and staff of a major community college district on issues of wholeness and spirituality, and

another (John Gardner) has introduced sessions on spirituality into his series of national conferences on the Freshman Year Experience. Both of these initiatives have been met with considerable enthusiasm on the part of the participants.

These activities and experiences have led the Steering Committee to propose the establishment of a more organized national effort to design and implement strategies that would enable American higher education to more effectively address issues of meaning, purpose, and spirituality in academic life. Four different types of activities have been proposed:

Campus Demonstration Projects. Individual campuses (or consortia of campuses) would be invited to undertake projects designed to engage faculty, staff, and students in an ongoing dialogue that focuses on issues of meaning and spirituality. Alternative strategies for engaging institutions and for generating and sustaining such dialogues on invited campuses would be implemented and evaluated.

Association-based Projects. The obvious success of the several sessions that have already been held at national meetings suggests that the national educational associations can provide excellent venues for facilitating discussion of these issues. A variety of associations would be approached with the aim of using association-sponsored annual meetings, workshops, and retreats as venues for stimulating dialogues about issues of meaning and spirituality among trustees, college presidents and other academic administrators, student affairs professionals, faculty, and student leaders.

Commissioned Papers. Diverse scholars and writers both inside and outside of academe would be approached to write essays, editorials, and op ed pieces that focus on issues of meaning and spirituality in higher education.

Research and Evaluation. Building on the pilot faculty interview study presented in this report, a continuing series of research studies would be undertaken to (a) explore in greater depth the issues raised in the current study as they might apply to students, staff, and faculty in a wider variety of institutions; and (b) conduct systematic evaluations of the campus-based and association-based demonstration projects described above.

In summary, the ultimate intent of these activities will be to explore what colleges and universities can do to encourage a greater awareness within academe of issues of spirituality and to achieve a greater sense of purpose and meaning in academic work. Our long-term aim, of course, is to enhance our institutions' capacity to assist their students in developing a sense of spirit, meaning and purpose and to lead lives that are responsible, healthy and whole.

Appendix

- Letter of Invitation
- Interview Protocol
- Members of the Steering Committee

Letter of Invitation

Dear Colleague:

We would like to invite you participate in a study on *Sources of stress and fragmentation in academic life.*

The study is a pilot effort involving approximately 80 faculty members, randomly selected from a variety of colleges and universities in California.

We hope to have a conversation with you about possible sources of stress in teaching, research, and collegial relationships. Often these stresses raise fundamental issues relative to the purpose and meaning of academic life.

Our reasons for wanting to hear from faculty directly is that we faculty members are in many respects responsible for formulating and implementing policies and practices that will shape higher education in the coming decades.

We are not interested in studying or reporting about specific institutions, but rather in identifying the full range of possible areas of stress that are currently experienced by American college and university faculty.

All interviews, of course, will be completely confidential and no identifying information about institutions or interviewees will be maintained.

We hope that you will be interested in becoming a participant in this effort by agreeing to meet with one of us or one of our colleagues (either a post-doctoral fellow or an advanced graduate student). We will follow-up with a telephone call or e-mail to set up a time and place that is convenient for you.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Alexander W. Astin
Allan M. Cartter Professor, Co-director

Helen S. Astin
Professor, Co-director

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL—FACULTY WHOLENESS AND AUTHENTICITY

Opening statement:

Hello and thank you for taking time out to talk with us and to help us understand better the complexity of faculty life, the stress faculty experience, and how faculty manage to make time for and balance the many facets of their lives. We are interested in how you deal with the various demands placed on you as a faculty member, how you balance your personal and professional lives, and how you deal with value conflicts you experience at work.

This conversation is strictly confidential and care will be taken to exclude all names or identifying characteristics from the data. We would like your permission to record our conversation on tape so that we can more accurately reflect your thoughts and experiences.

The interview will cover four areas: *demographic information*; the many aspects of faculty life and their struggles in *prioritizing and balancing*; what experiences have caused them to *compromise their values* and how they deal with these value conflicts; the *meaning and purpose* they derive from their work; and their sense of *spirituality*.

I. Demographic Information

1) You're currently a(n) _____ Professor in the _____ department, correct?
2) How long have you been at _____ (institution)?
3) What is your discipline or field?

II. Complexities, Priorities, and Balancing

At the Higher Education Research Institute we have been conducting national studies of faculty. As part of our studies we inquire about the sources of stress experienced by faculty, and some of the most frequent concerns are the lack of personal time, teaching loads, students, colleagues, research demands, and the review process.

Values and prioritizing work

4) Given all of these demands in your profession, how do you prioritize your many responsibilities and tasks? What is most important to you among them and why? (probe further into the *values* underlying their priorities, e.g., "Are you comfortable with the amount of importance you place on

your research compared to your teaching? What are your values with respect to your teaching and your research? How do you feel about not holding as many office hours as you would like with your students?")

Values about how you do your work

5) What about aspects of *how* you do your job? For example, your relationship with colleagues, the way you teach and evaluate students, the way you conduct research or raise funds—are you comfortable with these aspects of your job? (probe for *values*—e.g., "Why are you uncomfortable or dissatisfied with faculty meetings? Why do you wish you had a better relationship with faculty in your department? Why would you like to collaborate more on research?").

III. Value Conflicts and Compromising

6) I imagine that there have been times or situations that you have felt value conflicts with respect to students, colleagues, teaching, research, the review process, et cetera. Can you think of a specific time or incident in which you had to compromise your own values and beliefs because of something your job required you to do, or perhaps behave in a particular way that made you uncomfortable? How did you feel in that situation?

7) What about any institutional, departmental, or disciplinary policies, unwritten expectations, or practices—are there specific policies or expectations that you feel generate value conflicts for you? Can you describe some of those conflicts and how you feel about them?

8) What do you do about some of these situations or conflicts that are producing stress in your job? Have you made any changes in your lifestyle related to these conflicts since becoming a faculty member? If you were to make (further) changes to the way you carry out your work and balance it with the rest of your life, what would you do differently?

IV. Spirituality and the Meaning of Your Work

In the past few years, there have been conversations and a number of books written about our experience in the workplace and about fragmentation in our lives because of the lack of a connection or congruence between our personal lives at work. We are finding that some faculty describe their lives as fragmented because of these very value conflicts we have been discussing, and that they struggle to search for meaning in their work.

9) How does your job as a faculty member fit in with the rest of your life? How integral is what you do as a researcher, teacher, and academic colleague to the goals, values, or standards that you set for yourself as a person? What meaning do you make of your career and lifestyle?

10) Is the meaning of your work related at all to a sense of spirituality you have in your life?

Members of the Steering Committee on Spirituality in Higher Education

Tony Chambers	Program Officer The Fetzer Institute
Alexander Astin	Professor & Director, HERI—UCLA
Helen Astin	Professor & Associate Director, HERI—UCLA
Lisa Chambers	Formerly with the Michigan Campus Compact
Arthur Chickering	Visiting Distinguished Faculty member Norwich University
Paul Elsner	Former Chancellor Maricopa Community College District
John Gardner	Executive Director & Professor National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
Cynthia Johnson	ACPA Senior Fellow & former Professor
Cheryl Keen	Professor Antioch University
James Keen	Professor Antioch University
Carole Leland	Leadership Consultant
Laura Rendon	Professor, Arizona State University & President, Association for the Study of Higher Education
Eugene Rice	Director, American Association for Higher Education Forum on Faculty Roles & Rewards
Donna Shavlik	Former Director, Program for Women in Higher Education, American Council on Education

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